

MINUTES

COUNCIL ON RECYCLING
NOVEMBER 19, 2003
SCHLITZ AUDUBON NATURE CENTER
CLASSROOM 1
1111 EAST BROWN DEER ROAD
BAYSIDE, WISCONSIN

Council Members Present: Jeffrey Fielkow; Susan Hundt-Bergan; John Reindl; William Swift; Charlotte Zieve.

Council Members Absent: None (two vacancies)

Also attending: Randy Case, DNR; Karen Fiedler, Waukesha County; Marty Forman, Forman Metals; Jenna Kunde, WasteCap Wisconsin; Cynthia Moore, DNR; Pat Walsh, SHWEC.

Call To Order: The meeting was called to order by Chair John Reindl at 9:05 AM.

Introduction and Announcements: John Reindl passed around some newspaper articles.

Minutes: The Minutes were amended as follows; page 2, 2nd paragraph, 2nd line change 'biennium' to 'year'. Charlotte Zieve moved and Jeff Fielkow 2nd approval. Minutes were approved as amended.

Reports

Chair: John Reindl discussed some newspaper articles including the presidential proclamation on America Recycles Day, reuse of cell phones and mercury coming out of municipal landfill leachate as diethyl mercury.

Reindl said that a bill passed on recycled content in newsprint. The amount of required recycled paper was reduced from 40% to 33%. The used oil filter and oil absorbent bill was in committee. Reindl said Rep Miller is apparently ready to introduce legislation on electronics recycling. There are only two sessions left for the legislature to work on bills.

Updates:

DNR: Cynthia Moore, DNR, said that the waste bureau was experiencing staff and budget cuts and were reassessing their priorities. 2 of the 12 positions in recycling were being eliminated on July 1, 2004. She was not sure how many other positions were being eliminated in the waste program. The budget cuts will have a ripple effect on the program. The program has identified several issues that will be priorities for the next year. Single stream recycling is a significant issue. Single stream is when all of the materials are collected and transported together. There is a reduction in costs but a loss of quality. Moore said they are looking at a rule change that would eliminate obsolete language and add clarification. They may also look at effective program criteria and try to adopt more performance based measures. Dan Fields, DNR, has the lead and they hope to present the rule to the legislature by 2005. Moore said that they will also look at possible statute changes but not unless absolutely necessary. This review will also include the grants program but those changes are expected to be technical in nature. Bill Swift suggested that we work with the people affected and bypass the legal department as much as possible. Moore replied that it was very important that any rule be able to withstand any legal challenges. She pledged to include all stakeholders in discussions.

Moore said that stakeholders had approached the DNR on 'recycling away from home'. DNR is looking at developing messages.

Moore said that the waste program EMS is continuing. One objective is to minimize the materials sent to landfills. The EMS team will meet in January.

Setting Priorities: Reindl led the Council through the evaluation matrix. He said it is a guide to focus the discussion. Swift said electronics should include computers, cell phones and copiers. Reindl said each area encompasses many products. He said we needed to focus on the start to finish of products. It would be best to minimize generation. However, the Council itself cannot redesign products. Reindl said the role of the Council is limited. The Council is not an agency and can only do so much. It is the Council's responsibility to advise. He thought the Council should concentrate on areas where the Council can make a difference.

Fielkow asked for the following changes to the matrix for single stream: Wt recovery: Low/Medium to Medium/High; Econ value Medium to High. Jenna Kunde, WasteCap Wisconsin, asked about the Council's ability to do public relations. Reindl said that the statutory oversight given the Council included public relations. He said that DNR has been very responsive to the Council's recommendations. Susan Hundt-Bergan said that DNR has fiscal problems that may prevent them from doing much in this area. Reindl said that was true but that DNR is working with partners to do outreach and reenergize messages. Fielkow said the Council can make a difference by helping to tap into the environmental groups throughout the state. He said the 'recycling away from home' theme was important. Moore said that education is one of the RU requirements. Karen Fiedler, Waukesha County, said that, when budgets are cut, the education programs go first. RU's concentrate on nuts and bolts of collection and processing, not education. For example, there are no sessions scheduled on education at the AROW conference. Reindl said there are other opportunities for publicity and education.

Kunde said that C&D should be: econ value- Low-High. Moore asked about stabilizing commodity prices. Reindl replied that it was an issue that the Council could highlight and inform people of some options for RU's but the Council could not actually do anything to stabilize prices.

Fiedler said food waste could be of value if an infrastructure could be developed. Reindl said the costs are high and the returns are low. It takes time, incurs storage and other costs etc.

Fielkow asked about plastic film since it has been identified as a major material. Reindl said he would put that on the list along with rigid plastics.

Fiedler asked about adding yard waste as well. A collection system is needed if you are going to prevent backyard burning. Kunde said there were no standards for composting or other uses. Moore said composting is becoming an issue for DNR. Reindl asked that DNR come to a future meeting and discuss composting with the Council.

Based on suggestion from other Council members, Reindl asked that each member should choose 5 items and send their list to Reindl for a compilation to be sent to the full Council. Out of those choices the Council will pick 2-3 to focus on for the next year. All then issues are important but they can't work on them all. Both Kunde and Reindl said that the last column, 'ability of the Council to make a difference' was particularly important. Reindl said he would set up a conference Dec. 9 to make the final decisions.

Hundt-Bergan said the DNR needs to do policy papers so there is consistency statewide on many issues. Moore said they were working on that.

Public Comment: Kunde said that WasteCap was holding a Talk & Tour at Onyx. It is part of their EPA/DNR grant to increase the recycling of fluorescent lamps. She invited members to subscribe to the WasteCap e-newsletter. There is no cost to subscribe.

Marty Forman, Forman Metals, and former Chair of the Council said that his experience has led him to the following conclusions. 1) Any activity that makes money needs no assistance. 2) You must introduce profit into the process. 3) Markets fluctuate. 4) Profit drives industry and public opinion. 5) Look at the ultimate cost of recycling. An example is monitors. He says he ships monitors overseas. 8 out of 10 monitors he gets cannot be used in the US. He believes that 7 out of 10 he ships overseas are reused. He does not think any of them should be recycled. They are a health hazard to anyone working on them. They should go to a sanitary landfill because of the ultimate human cost to recycle them. There is plenty of space to site landfills. We do not need to recycle everything. We need to recycle items that make money. Reindl noted that the EMS is supposed to look at the issue of actual environmental impacts.

Mercury Reduction Activities: Randy Case, DNR addressed the Council. (For a copy of his presentation contact Case at charles.case@dnr.state.wi.us) Case said that mercury is a widely

used and very useful material. It is also volatile and bio-accumulates. The mercury levels are low in lakes and streams but high in fish- over 1 million times higher in fish than in the water. All lakes in Wisconsin have fish consumption advisories because of mercury. He said that there are 20 cities involved in the Wisconsin Community Mercury Reduction Program. This program has helped collect 13,000 pounds of elemental mercury since 1998. Many schools and hospitals have stopped using mercury. The goal is to make all schools and hospitals mercury free.

Some of the major product releases to the environment include: dental amalgam- 700kg/yr; thermostats- 480kg/yr; fever thermometers- 270 kg/yr; fluorescent lamps- 270kg/yr; automobile switches- 110kg/yr. All Wisconsin coal utilities: 950kg/yr. He said that all fluorescent bulbs still contain mercury. Some of the newer ones have reduced mercury but still have mercury in them. Case said that he is doing outreach to the dental community. Most of the amalgam is released to sanitary sewer systems. Tight mercury standards for the Great Lakes means that treatment plants need to make efforts to reduce the amount of mercury that reaches their plants. New DNR rules require low-level monitoring, which captures mercury levels that were not detectable before. The treatment plants can get a variance in exchange for developing a mercury reduction program.

Case said the goals for the programs include: reducing use of mercury containing products; recycle; reduce potential for spills. Other goals include medical community implementation of the American Hospital Association program for hospitals to become mercury free; dentists implement best management practices- which includes installing traps and amalgam separators and then recycling the mercury captured, and making schools mercury free. Case said that Dane County did a survey of dentists and mercury. It showed that there was a lot of work to do. The Wisconsin Dental Association is very supportive and is working on this issue.

The driver for this activity is that the 100 largest treatment plants in Wisconsin are subject to new administrative rules. They will collect data on mercury for 2 years and then have to show that they are reaching the levels required. They will need to develop a local mercury-recycling infrastructure. It has to be convenient, and at least cheap, if not free. There has also been a problem finding vendors for dental amalgam.

Case said that there is an underutilized national program called the 'Thermostat Recycling Program' where thermostats can be recycled for free through heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) wholesalers and contractors. That program needs to be promoted. Moore said that was a good program because the producers were taking responsibility for their product.

Case said there has been a lot of progress. He said the two key needs are targeted mercury product legislation and mercury product recycling infrastructure.

Other Business: The Council will meet by conference call on Dec 9th to determine their priorities. The Council will have their regular meeting on January 21, 2004, at the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, I90/94 and Hwy. 12, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.

Adjournment: Zieve moved, Swift seconded. The Council adjourned at 11:25 AM

Respectfully submitted by Daniel B. Fields, Department of Natural Resources.